

HEARING STATEMENT – MATTER 4

PEEL LAND AND INVESTMENTS
EXAMINATION OF HYNDBURN LOCAL PLAN
2018-049
AUGUST 2025

Signing off Sheet

Client: Peel Land and Investments PLC
Project: Hyndburn EIP
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Authorised for and on behalf NJL Consulting

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Managing Director

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by NJL Consulting, This Hearing Statement has been prepared by NJL Consulting (NJL) on behalf of Peel Land and Property Investments PLC (Peel) in relation to the Examination of Hyndburn's Local Plan (Strategic Policies and Site Allocations). Peel owns the Hyndburn Retail Park (formerly known as The Peel Centre), Whitebirk and this hearing statement is in response to Matters Issues and Questions associated with the site.
- 1.2 This statement relates to Matter 4 and only covers those issues which we wish to comment further on at this stage, in direct response to the Matters Issues and Questions (MIQs) document issued by the Inspector. However, we reserve the right to provide additional comments on any matter should the Council submit additional evidence or information.
- 1.3 Peel own and manage Hyndburn Retail Park, on Whitebirk Drive which lies within the administrative boundary of Hyndburn Borough Council. Considering their interest in the Borough, NJL have previously submitted representations on behalf of Peel, through the 'Call for Sites' exercise (February 2017) and Site Allocations Consultation Paper exercise (April 2018), both as a retail/leisure facility and a location for uses complementary to the wider Whitebirk employment area. They since submitted further representation to Regulation 18 and 19 stages in 2023 and 2024, the most recent representation from 2024 is appended to this statement.
- 1.4 Nick Lee, Managing Director at NJL Consulting will be appearing at the relevant hearing session on Wednesday 17th September.

2. Hearing Statement – Matter 4 The Economy and Town Centres

Issue 4: Has the Plan been positively prepared and is it justified, effective and consistent with national policy in respect of its policies and proposals for employment land and town centres in Hyndburn?

Policy SP6 Centre Hierarchy, Strategy and Retail Provision: Question 23: Are the town and local centre boundaries shown on the Policies Map justified? Have they been reviewed?

- 2.1 We acknowledge that the Council has reviewed town and local centre boundaries. However, the exclusion of Hyndburn Retail Park from the hierarchy is not justified. The Retail Park already functions as a major retail and leisure cluster as acknowledged within the policy, with a strong draw and defined market role. Excluding it fails to reflect the reality of Hyndburn's retail geography as set out in our appended representations.
- 2.2 Policy SP6 Centre Hierarchy, Strategy and Retail Provision Question 24: Should the Policy give greater recognition of the leisure and commercial uses at Hyndburn Retail Park and the potential role of the site in adding to the commercial attractiveness of the planned employment allocations?
- 2.3 Yes. Hyndburn Retail Park provides a unique mix of retail, leisure and food uses which complement, rather than compete with, existing town centres. Its proximity to major employment allocations means it plays an important role in strengthening the Borough's commercial attractiveness. Policy SP6 should be amended to explicitly acknowledge this function. In this context, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 23 states local authorities should: *"Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, community and residential development needed in town centre. It is important that needs for retail leisure, office, and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability."*
- 2.4 Given the importance of delivering aspirational, but realistic, Local Plans (as advocated in the NPPF) we believe the Council should plan positively for development in the based on sound evidence. We believe that this policy should more readily acknowledging the role the retail park plays now and, in the future, (when accounting for wider planned development). We believe the park should be fully acknowledged

in the retail hierarchy and it follows that the most effective approach to undertake this is to identify it as an additional centre

- 2.5 Given the existing and planned development to be seen in this area over the coming plan period, the reality is that the retail park will be truly surrounded by substantial elements of Hyndburn and Blackburn's established and planned strategic employment and residential locations. Such locations drive demand for centre uses in close proximity at the level of being service uses for local journeys. As such, the role and importance of this park will become more significant for local residents, businesses, and employees and will only add to the attractiveness of these allocations to potential developers and occupiers. Hence, being clear over its position in retail terms and promoting it as a proper centre will only assist in wider investment and delivery of new development.
- 2.6 The proposed policy does not reference the substantial planned employment growth along the M65 corridor to meet growth aspirations and how the retail park can, through a diverse offering of retail and other supportive uses, assist this growth by adding to the commercial attractiveness of the planned employment areas.
- 2.7 Whilst the wording, in part, acknowledges this by noting the park will '*support retailing on the site and the strategic employment hub at Whitebirk/Frontier Park*', there needs to be clearer wording in that the site will support existing employment such as the Frontier Park but also add to the commercial attractiveness and therefore likely success of the employment sites (EM4, EM5 and EM6).
- 2.8 As such, an amendment to this wording if retained should be as follows: '*support retailing and other centre uses on the site and the strategic employment hub at Whitebirk/Frontier Park and planned strategic employment release detailed under Policy SP4.*'
- 2.9 To provide the context, and as detailed in previous representations, the level of growth expected in this area is significant. The existing Frontier Park development alone could create 1,900 new jobs which in turn could generate additional employee led retail and leisure expenditure of approximately £4.5m.
- 2.10 Further strategic housing and employment allocations within the Blackburn Local Plan clearly indicate this is an area of substantial growth and change with the large housing allocation (supporting 1,500 homes) to the north of Hyndburn Retail Park within Blackburn beginning works as of August 2025. Please refer to our previous 2024

representation, as appended to this statement, to provide further detail on the context to the site.

Policy SP6 Centre Hierarchy, Strategy and Retail Provision Question 25: In terms of the retail hierarchy is there justification for identifying Hyndburn Retail Park as a 'centre'?

2.11 Yes.

2.12 Hyndburn Retail Park meets the functional definition of a "centre" in the NPPF, by virtue of its clustering of main town centre uses, its catchment, and its established commercial role.

2.13 The policy as written lists Hyndburn Retail Park (as 'The Peel Centre') within the retail hierarchy, as an 'Other Commercial Location' alongside Oswaldtwistle Mills. This is set outside the tiered approach which is as follows:

- Tier 1: Strategic Town Centre
- Tier 2: Town Centres
- Tier 3: Local Centres
- Tier 4: Neighbourhood Centres/Local Parades

2.14 Within the hierarchy presented, the plan identifies Hyndburn Retail Park's purpose as a 'Predominantly bulky goods retail destination with ancillary uses to support retailing on the site and the strategic employment hub at Whitebirk/Frontier Park'.

2.15 Peel welcomes the recognition that Hyndburn Retail Park can perform a mixed and varied retail and leisure role, including bulky and non-bulky retail uses along with providing supportive uses and this reflects the changes seen on the ground in recent years. They also welcome the recognition that such flexibility of use will support the development of Frontier Park, however, this recognition should now be broadened to reference other existing and proposed allocations for both housing and employment which collectively will result in a substantial growth area.

2.16 Peel's view is that designating the Retail Park as a 'centre', has not been thoroughly considered in the Local Plan. Given the timescales on new and recent leases, the park will continue to serve a range of retailers, both bulky and non-bulky as well as other service and leisure uses without any dramatic wholesale change. Hence, the consequences of designating as a centre are not to trigger any substantive major

change. Rather, it is to enable managed change through planning on a much more flexible process.

- 2.17 Given the wider scale of development, it is more appropriate to consider it as a Tier 3 District Centre, as it now serves a wider catchment through the typical bulkier goods operators and a more localised catchments with the inclusion of non-bulky goods including food retailers and gym operators which have been and will continue to serve the immediate area. This shift in the hierarchy would more accurately reflect its standing and its role and function; as well as anticipating how the Local Plan allocations themselves will enhance that role over time.
- 2.18 This designation would provide policy clarity, manage future proposals effectively, and better reflect its established role in Hyndburn's retail economy and the immediate geography to the east of Blackburn.
- 2.19 Importantly, such recognition would not undermine Accrington, Blackburn or other identified centres but rather complement their role by accommodating large format uses that cannot be readily delivered elsewhere.
- 2.20 It is notable in this respect that those operators at the retail park that are not considered solely Bulky Goods operators, are, on the whole, still operating within the nearby town centres, particularly within Hyndburn itself with Accrington seeing all non-bulky goods operators at the retail park also located within its town centre.
- 2.21 This multi-centre location of users demonstrates that there are differing catchments and hence, the retail park is functioning to meet more immediate current needs and should be promoted in the Local Plan to meet planned needs.

Operator	Goods Control	Accrington town centre	Blackburn town centre
Currys	Bulky Goods		
Sofology	Bulky Goods		
Clubhouse padel	Leisure	No	No
Home Bargains	Bulky/Non Bulky Goods	Yes	Yes
JD Gyms	Commercial/leisure	No	No
JD Sports shop	Clothes/Sports Goods	No	Yes
B&M	Bulky/Non Bulky Goods	Yes	No
The Food Warehouse	Food	Yes	No
Smyths Toy stores	Bulky/Non Bulky Goods	No	No
Wren Kitchens	Bulky Goods		

Farmfoods	Food	Yes	Yes
Dreams	Bulky Goods		
Costa	Restaurant	Yes	Yes
Aldi	Food	Yes	Yes
SCS	Bulky Goods		

- 2.22 The retail park is in a sustainable location; adjacent main private and public transport routes and plays an important role in serving local need, including for people who work close by who link commuting trips, as shown in our representations in 2024.
- 2.23 Grouping retail uses, for example in a District Centre, is more sustainable than standalone facilities which could emerge if retail growth is not directed to or can be managed through promoting centres in policy terms. The outcome can be a more “scattered” retail provision as opposed to a co-ordinated process of directing potential occupiers to defined centres.
- 2.24 Having an additional centre which offers some flexibility of use / adaption on sizing can therefore protect other centres by preventing new standalone sites coming forward in less sustainable locations.
- 2.25 An example whereby a policy approach such as this has worked effectively to anticipate significant planned growth is within the Doncaster Local Plan under Policy 6 Doncaster Sheffield Airport Policy.
- 2.26 This policy whilst being framed as a town centre in the retail hierarchy, establishes the beneficial co-location of uses and sets out a clear policy framework to allow for large, planned development to be effectively established and not overly restricted by negative policy. As quoted:
- ‘7. An area of 105.5 hectares (as shown on the Policies Map as Sites DSA01, DSA02 & DSA03 and which includes existing woodlands) is identified for a mixed use development to support the growth of Doncaster Sheffield Airport, help the Airport to realise its economic potential and **to create the sustainable co-location of employment uses, housing (linked to the delivery of jobs), and retail and commercial elements (NJL Emphasis)** within the Airport Policy Area, as per Parts 1 – 3 below. These areas will form part of a masterplan exercise (see Part K below) ensuring **a co-ordinated and integrated approach to place making which links the individual components together (NJL Emphasis)**:
 - 10 hectares of land (as shown on the Policies Map as Site DSA01) is allocated as a central area of retail, commercial and business uses, known as ‘the Plaza’.

Within this area will be a new town centre, with approximately 8,500m² of retail, food and drink and leisure floorspace; about 8,900m² of hotel floorspace; approximately 13,600m² of airport related office floorspace (or offices for businesses who wish to take advantage of being close to an airport); approximately 150 upper floor apartments.

- 11 hectares of land (as shown on the Policies Map as Site DSA02) is allocated for housing to accommodate up to 280 dwellings to support initial phases of airport expansion and employment growth.
- An additional area of approximately 70 hectares (as shown on the Policies Map as Site DSA03) is proposed as an Airport Reserve Housing Site and could accommodate up to 920 houses.'

2.27 The establishment of a specific policy whereby it is clearly identified how various established and emerging components can, together, support strong place making is comparable to the situation in Hyndburn. As we have detailed through this statement and prior representation, Hyndburn Retail Park is at the very heart of the wider growth area including an allocated strategic housing site (H195) (orange boundary), primary employment area (green boundary), emerging employment allocations (EMP 4, 5 and 6) (red boundary), Frontier Park (blue boundary) and the Whitebirk Estate regeneration area (yellow boundary).



2.28 Notwithstanding these evident sustainability benefits, there are notable retail market and development benefits which support this approach. Retail parks typically cater for

specific market requirements. Conversely, higher order centres (such as Accrington, Great Harwood and Oswaldtwistle) contain a mix of units with lower order centres (Rishton) containing smaller units.

- 2.29 All of the retail units present at Hyndburn Retail Park are above 500sqm. Conversely, we know from the Council's Retail Thresholds Note that only 4% of units within Accrington Town Centre are 500sqm or above, Great Harwood and Oswaldtwistle only have 2% of units above 500sqm and Rishton and Clayton-le-Moor have no retail units of that scale. This tells us that the Retail Park, has a very different make up and therefore, retail offer, to the existing centres in Hyndburn and requires its own identification in the hierarchy to support this.
- 2.30 As noted above, the Local Plan notes the "important role" of retail parks in meeting shopping needs. In this context, larger retail parks, such as Hyndburn Retail Park, should be designated as a District Centres. This would complement and support the overall retail 'offer' by providing a range of retail uses and unit sizes which cannot be readily accommodated within a town centre or lower order centre. This retains customer expenditure that would otherwise be lost to competing centres and retail destinations in competing local authority areas.
- 2.31 Accordingly, it would be a sustainable location to accommodate some of the large footprint retail requirements that form part of the needs of the Borough as identified in the Retail Study. Designating it as a District Centre is an appropriate way to direct suitable retail development which cannot be met in the defined town centres, in a sustainable form. Such an approach would not undermine existing traditional 'centres' which remain the focus for new retail development, thus maintaining vitality and viability. Allocating a new District Centre allows the local authority to sustainably plan for retail needs as well as being able to properly reflect the most up to date position over centre related uses under Class E of the Use Classes Order.

3. Proposed Development

Policy/Paragraph: SP6 – Centre Hierarchy, Strategy and Retail Provision

Proposed Modification: We suggest that the policy be amended to include the following within the centre hierarchy:

Tier 3: District Centre - Hyndburn Retail Park	District centre, separate from the identified town centres, which will be the preferred location to meet needs arising from existing residential and employment areas development of nearby strategic employment locations for supporting uses, including but not limited to, retail, food and drink, leisure, hotels, and fuel facilities, including EV charging stations.
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3.1 At Hyndburn Retail Park, new build proposals will be assessed against the sequential and impact tests at national policy only. Locally defined retail impact thresholds will not apply, in recognition of the Retail Park's established role as a retail and leisure destination and its complementary relationship with town centres.

Justification:

3.2 The Retail Study (2016) identifies Hyndburn Retail Park as the Borough's largest retail warehouse location, performing a complementary role to Accrington and other centres (paras 6.2 to 6.6).

3.3 The Retail Thresholds Evidence Note (2016) justifies lower thresholds primarily due to the small scale and vulnerability of local centres, but this evidence does not apply to an established destination such as Hyndburn Retail Park as it would be disproportionate and unnecessary, given the large floorspace provision and its role is already embedded in the retail geography of the Borough.

3.4 The NPPF sequential and impact tests are more appropriate with regard to new build development to ensure new development does not undermine town centres.

3.5 Removing local thresholds would provide flexibility and support for investment in the Borough's primary commercial destination, supporting the wider economic and employment strategy (SP4, SP31 and aligns with the suggested modification provided for policy SP31.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 This document has been prepared by NJL Consulting on behalf of 'Peel Land and Property Investments PLC' in response to the forthcoming Examination in public. On behalf of Peel, we have made a number of suggested changes to the ongoing Local Plan preparation.
- 4.2 We believe that there is a real opportunity to consider this whole area on a more joined up basis to create a more sustainable planning outcome. There are opportunities to link recent and proposed developments in transport terms, and to recognise more accurately the role that the Hyndburn Retail Park plays now and how it can be further enhanced in the future.
- 4.3 Our previous representations have considered a number of ideas with regard to how the retail park should be considered. It is logical, now that development at Frontier Park is nearing completion, and in considering how accessibility should be further taken forward in the wider area, to review this further. Given the increased scale of development very close by, it is more appropriate to consider it as a Tier 3 District Centre as this would more accurately reflect its standing in the hierarchy and its role and function; as well as anticipating how the Local Plan allocations themselves will enhance that role over time in any event.
- 4.4 Therefore, in summary, the Local Plan should:
- Be fully aligned with the suggested modifications;
 - Recognise the potential for additional flexible retail, leisure, and other supportive uses at Hyndburn Retail Park; and
 - Create a policy approach which recognises the role of the retail park in meeting local demand for well-located and sustainable facilities in this area of the borough.
- 4.5 Therefore, the retail park presents a clear opportunity to promote the most sustainable patterns of development (for example, the promotion of linked trips) by grouping supporting uses together in a broad area, rather than providing facilities in a sporadic way on individual smaller opportunity sites.
- 4.6 Overall, Peel supports the general 'direction of travel' but consider that amendments are required for the Plan to be effective and to respond to the evidence base and

then set frameworks which enable sustainable patterns of growth. In particular, the Plan should ensure the full range of retail, leisure and other supportive uses can be delivered at the park and thereby meet existing and future demand (as accepted in the consultation Plans.)

- 4.7 We remain concerned that the plan downplays planned economic growth opportunities, particularly those linked to this area of the borough and how retail policies can better reflect the changing landscape through this Development Plan and the neighbouring Blackburn Local Plan.
- 4.8 The retail park is in a sustainable location within the heart of the urban area, close to existing and proposed large scale residential and employment locations, which it will be at the centre of. Therefore, the retail park presents a clear opportunity to promote the most sustainable patterns of development (for example, the promotion of linked trips) by grouping supporting uses together in a broad area, rather than providing facilities in a sporadic way on individual smaller opportunity sites.
- 4.9 We trust the above comments can be considered appropriately and we welcome the opportunity to discuss this in more depth at the Examination hearing.

Appendix 1 - Representations March 2024

Hyndburn Local Plan (Strategic Policies and Site Allocations): Regulation 19 Consultation (2024)

Representations on behalf of 'Peel Land and Property Investments'

Hyndburn Retail Park, Whitebirk, Hyndburn

Signing off Sheet

Client: Peel Land and Property Investments Ltd
Project: Hyndburn Retail Park
Ref: 2012-067
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Previous Representations Submitted on behalf of Peel and Property Investments.

1. Introduction

1.1 We write on behalf of our client, Peel Land and Property Investments Plc ('Peel'), the owners of Hyndburn Retail Park (formerly known as The Peel Centre), Whitebirk, in response to the Hyndburn Local Plan Consultation Submission Stage. The below image shows the location of the site.



Figure 1: Hyndburn Retail Park

1.2 These representations should be read in conjunction with and addition to those submitted by us in February 2017, April 2018, April 2019, and January 2023 as part of the previous consultations undertaken by Hyndburn Council.

1.3 Peel have owned Hyndburn Retail Park for many years and have continued to invest in the retail park throughout that time. It has become recognised as a key retail facility in the Hyndburn / Blackburn retail hierarchy, fulfilling a vital role in terms of shopping needs. Over time the types of occupiers have evolved to include both food (Aldi, Iceland), alternative bulkier non-food occupiers (such as Smyths Toys), large format variety retailers (Home Bargains and B&M) and supporting food and drink uses (Costa), as well as commercial leisure use (JD Gyms). Retailers have also changed their own formats, which often require a blend of ranges and types of goods within their premises.

1.4 Peel believe that there is a real opportunity to consider the whole Whitebirk/Greenbank area on a more joined up basis to create a more sustainable planning outcome. There

are opportunities to link recent and proposed developments in transport terms, and to recognise more accurately the role that Hyndburn Retail Park plays now and how it can be further enhanced in the future.

- 1.5 At a procedural level, Hyndburn Retail Park is referenced throughout this policy and beyond as 'The Peel Centre'. This name should now be removed and replaced with Hyndburn Retail Park which is now the name used by Peel for marketing and wider uses.
- 1.6 These representations go on to identify concerns with the 'soundness' of the emerging Plan, particularly where it relates to retail hierarchy.
- 1.7 We wish to remain involved in Local Development Plan preparation, so the Plan is genuinely effective and deliverable. To be clear the representors do not come from a position of simply objecting to emerging policies, rather they are seeking to ensure that policies are fully justified and deliverable.

Policy Context

- 1.8 Section 3 of the NPPF sets out the Government's requirements with regards 'Plan making'. Paragraph 16 states that plans should inter alia: a) 'be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development; b) be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable; d) contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals; and f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area.'
- 1.9 Paragraph 31 onwards confirms the requirements of the Framework with regards preparing and reviewing plans and clearly states: 'The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and consider relevant market signals.'
- 1.10 In terms of the examination of local plans, paragraph 35 confirms plans are 'sound' if they are:
 - a) 'Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring area is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

- b) Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c) Effective – deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- d) Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.'

1.11 NPPF Paragraph 119 where it stated that planning policies 'should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for new homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions'. Furthermore, paragraph 120. makes clear that planning policies should:

- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
- d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained, and available sites could be used more effectively.

Report Structure

1.12 These representations have been prepared having regard to the requirements of the NPPF as a whole and particularly in respect of the specific paragraphs referred to above. This document is set out in the following sections:

1. Introduces the need for these representations;
2. Overview of the evidence base showing wider context and positioning of the retail park against existing and planned growth;
3. Reviews the site context and planning history;
4. Provides commentary on relevant policies; and
5. Conclusion.

2. Wider Context

- 2.1 Whilst situated within Hyndburn, the catchment for the Retail Park crosses over the local authority boundary into Blackburn with Accrington Town Centre and Blackburn Town Centre being the primary locations to review and consider the implications of a potential wider retail offering at the site.
- 2.2 As detailed below, significant investment in recent years and planned future growth, leads the retail park to now perform a much more sustainable role than ever before as a centre for that area, with significant linked trips associated with people working nearby, as well as within the wider area.
- 2.3 The below image shows the site at the very heart of the wider growth area including an allocated strategic housing site (H195) (orange boundary), primary employment area (green boundary), emerging employment allocations (EMP 4, 5 and 6) (red boundary), Frontier Park (blue boundary) and the Whitebirk Estate regeneration area (yellow boundary).



Figure 2: Existing and Planning Growth

Positioning in relation to existing and planned growth

Existing Growth Areas

2.4 The regionally important 'Whitebirk 65' (Frontier Park) Strategic Employment Site, to the south of the retail park, has planning consent for over 1,000,000 sqft of employment floorspace with a modest amount of 'amenity' type floorspace (including food and drink uses) and is being built out. During one of the first phases, a new service station near Junction 6 of the M65 with a BP petrol station with retail units opened in September 2018.



Figure 3: Frontier Park Masterplan

2.5 The Frontier Park development alone could create 1,900 new jobs which in turn could generate additional employee led retail and leisure expenditure of approximately £4.5m (based on VISA Europe data which indicates employees typically spend up to £2,400 per annum on before work, lunchtime and after work retail purchases and associated activities). This is in addition to existing unmet local employee expenditure from current employment areas in Whitebirk and adjoining areas such as Greenbank, and Whitebirk employment sites.

2.6 In the case of Hyndburn Retail Park, it's location so close to Frontier Park and as detailed below, emerging allocations under Hyndburn's Local Plan (EMP 4, 5 and 6), in addition to other extensive long-standing employment and residential areas promoted through Blackburn Councils Local Plan means it is the ideal location in which to concentrate such facilities alongside bulky goods retail operators.

Blackburn Local Plan and Blackburn Growth Axis

2.7 The Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan 2021-2037 was adopted in January 2024 and sets a clear strategy for bringing land forward to address objectively assessed needs in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The plan has a series of key aims and direction of development and is detailed further on the key diagram (Figure 7) below:

- The Blackburn Growth Axis: an economic framework linking strategic development sites and key growth corridors across the Borough and beyond;
- The Darwen Town Investment Plan: a series of major improvements for Darwen supported by the Darwen Town Deal;
- A North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site: a new neighbourhood on the edge of the town;
- A South East Blackburn Strategic Employment Site: to attract jobs and investment at a key motorway location;
- Blackburn Town Centre Major Development Sites: a unique opportunity to boost the vitality of Blackburn town centre; and
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan: an important series of interventions to improve infrastructure for all, such as roads, schools and health facilities.

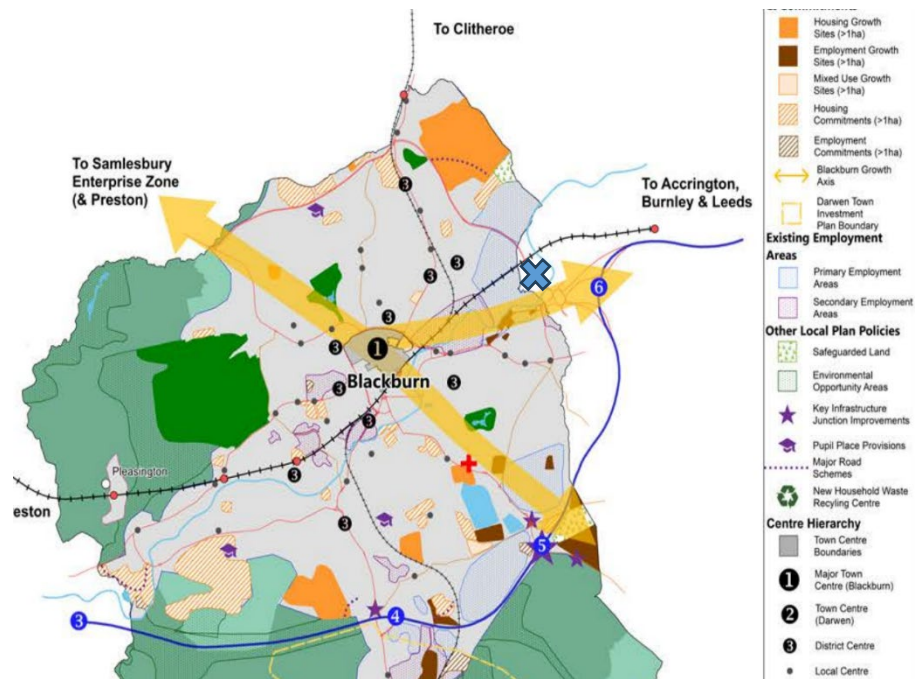


Figure 4: Key Diagram (Blackburn Local Plan 2024)

- 2.8 Figure 7 sets out the key spatial principles and ideas set out in this Local Plan and demonstrates the retail park's location within this context and shows how the site (marked with a blue cross) will be effectively surrounded by planned growth.
- 2.9 Under the Local Plan, Blackburn Council has promoted an economic framework of strategic and local development sites and opportunities that link the M65, key growth corridors and Samlesbury Enterprise Zone, a future economic driver of the Borough, with Blackburn Town Centre.

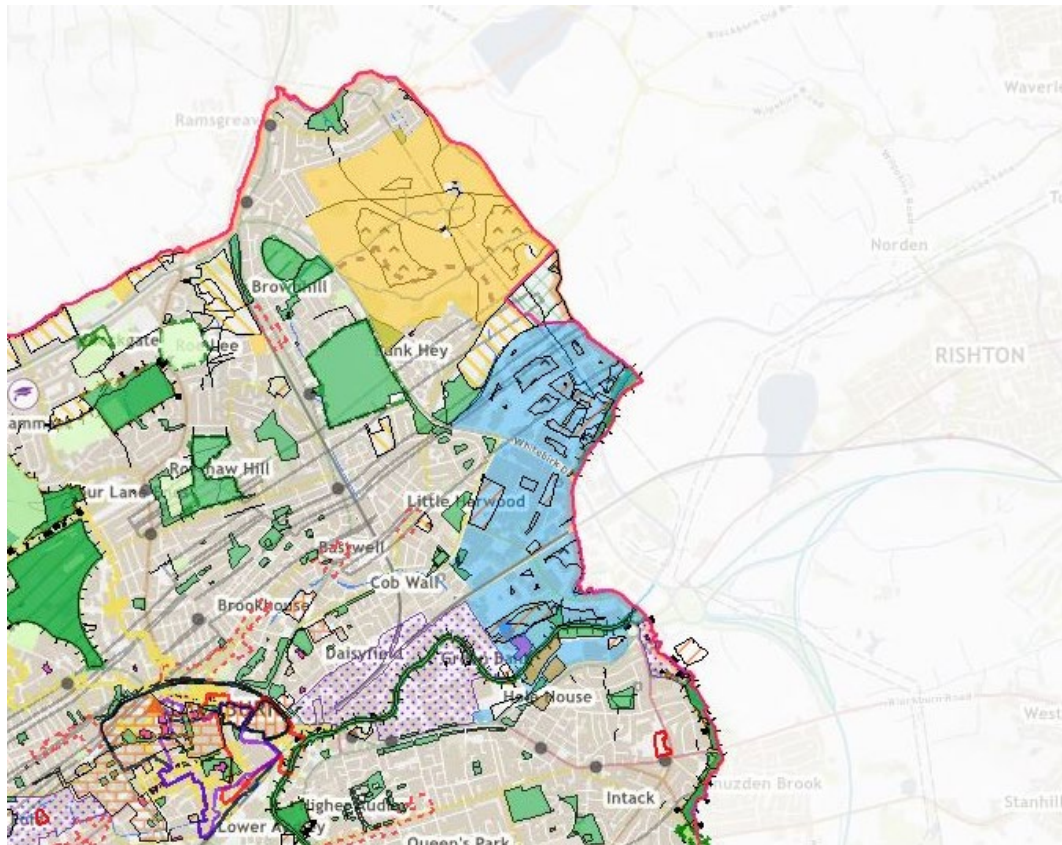


Figure 5: Blackburn Allocations Plan (Adopted 2024)

- 2.10 A strategic urban extension (Roe Lee and Little Harwood and Whitebirk, shaded in orange in Figure 8) is within close proximity of the retail park. It is a large allocation site which would provide approximately 1,500 new dwellings one mile from the application site (H195 – North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site). It is detailed that 690 residential units are to be delivered within the plan period with 810 units beyond.
- 2.11 A development of this size could generate a retail expenditure per annum amounting to circa £40,000,000 which is a significant increase and can be supported by a well-placed retail offering.

2.12 Within the Primary Employment Area (shaded blue on the proposals map in Figure 8), there are additional employment sites being delivered as follows:

- Site Ref. E242 Land off Phillips Road - expected to deliver 13,043 sqm B Use Class and 843 sqm E Use Class.
- Site Ref. E237 Land to SE of Lower Phillips Road – expected to deliver 11,112 sqm B Use Class.
- Site Ref. E238 Brentwood House, Whitebirk Ind Estate - expected to deliver 985 sqm B Use Class.
- Site Ref. E236 Land off Greenbank Road – expected to deliver 14,223 sqm B Use Class.
- Site Ref. E230 Plot 1 Vacant Land to the corner of Challenge Way and Blakewater Road – Expected to deliver 1,112 sqm B Use Class.
- Site Ref. E235 Land adj Challenge Way, Glenfield Park - expected to deliver 3,930 sqm B Use Class.

2.13 These employment allocations will deliver circa 44,405 sqm or 477,971 sqft of additional floorspace and an additional 1,000 new jobs which in turn would generate additional employee led retail and leisure expenditure of approximately £2.4 million per annum.

2.14 It is again clear that there is significant growth planned for the surrounding area with Hyndburn Retail Park having a centred position to serve these areas, the additional residents and significant employee growth.

Whitebirk Estate Regeneration

2.15 Alongside new employment and housing developments promoted through Hyndburn and Blackburn development plans, it is key to note the intentions associated with the nearby Whitebirk Estate.

2.16 Together Housing Group own and manage nearly 8,000 residential properties in Blackburn with Darwen, with some 1,300 of these located across two residential estates at Shadsworth and Whitebirk to the east of the town centre. Working with its development partners, Place Capital Group, Together Housing Group has carried out a comprehensive appraisal of the estates to understand challenges and opportunities presented in realising a sustainable future for these areas and are now actively promoting regeneration in this area.

- 2.17 THG's regeneration proposals will realise a new future for the estates, contributing a significant capital investment in the estates to address some of the long standing environmental, economic and social challenges which are evident across the areas whilst providing new properties and improving existing properties.
- 2.18 The overarching Development Agreement is to regenerate the 440-unit housing estate with new homes, targeted demolish and rebuild, improved public realm, new park and community centre.



Figure 6: Whitebirk Housing Estate

- 2.19 The regeneration of this area will bring new homes and residents back into the area which again highlights the changing landscape of the area surrounding Hyndburn Retail Park and how it will function as a central location for retail and related services.

Emerging Hyndburn Local Plan Allocations

- 2.20 The emerging Local Plan, as detailed later in this representation, also proposes substantial additional employment allocations (sites EMP4, 5 and 6) which will add further critical mass to the commercial employment area clustered around M65

junction 6, with the result that the retail park will be surrounded by substantial development on all sides.

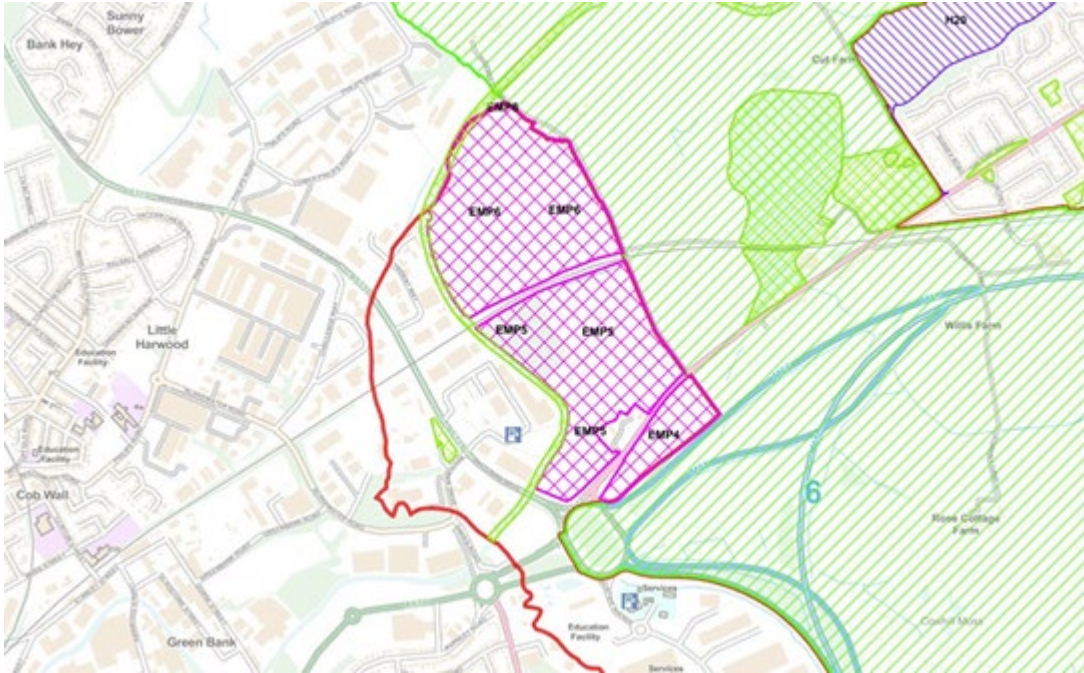


Figure 7: Emerging Local Plan Employment Allocations

Impact on Inward investment

- 2.21 Considering the proposals outlined within this representation and its impacts upon nearby towns, a review of existing and planned investments within nearby town centres has been carried out to assess whether the suggested revision to the retail park's positioning in the hierarchy would have a significant adverse impact upon retailer investment into these areas.
- 2.22 As detailed within the following paragraphs, there is clear investment being made in the town centres at a level that should be considered significant when balancing the potential for impacts from a wider retail offering at Hyndburn Retail Park.

Accrington Town Centre

- 2.23 In January 2022, Hyndburn approved the Accrington Town Centre Investment Plan (TCIP) which is to be used to generate future investments, bid for funding, and steer Hyndburn Borough Council. It is estimated to take shape over the next 10 – 15 years and, when complete, will transform the local economy through supporting new jobs and increasing footfall. To date, Hyndburn has received the following funding which will be utilised to ensure continued investment into the town:

- Hyndburn's Levelling Up Fund: £23 million (including HBC and LCC match funding)
- Lancashire County Council's £50 million Levelling Up Fund (Hyndburn indicative allocation): £15 million
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund: £3 million

2.24 The investment is ongoing and will continue to be delivered until 2027.

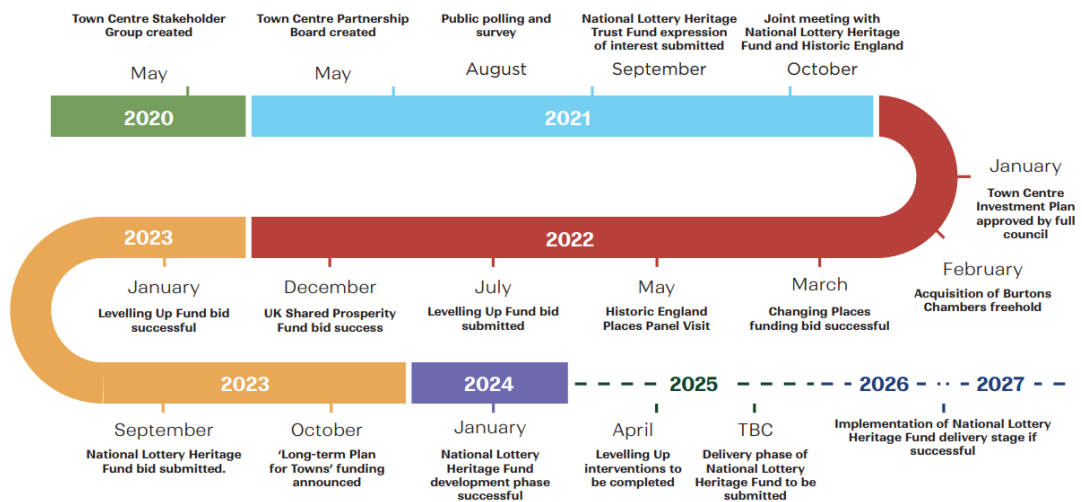


Figure 8: Accrington Town Centre Investment Plan Timeline

2.25 When considering specific projects that are to be delivered within the town, the following are of significance and will continue to establish investor confidence in regenerating the town:

- Accrington Market Hall, which will be refurbished and transformed into a food and drink destination for local people and to welcome visitors from across the county. Planning approval was granted in January 2024 for the first of the applications required to deliver the £70m scheme.
- Burtons Chambers building, opposite the Town Hall and Market Hall, which will be restored to become a co-working space for local people to work from and for businesses and events.
- Market Chambers building, next to Burton Chambers, which will be refurbished and repaired, aiming to transform it into a cultural, arts and heritage venue moving forward.

Blackburn Town Centre

- 2.26 Blackburn has received support from the government with £20m from the levelling up partnership. This takes the total to more than £125m and at the heart of the bid for this tranche is £8m to renovate King George's Hall – part of Blackburn's £50m cultural quarter.
- 2.27 In recent years, Blackburn has secured the following funding to invest into the town:
- £20m of levelling up funding for a new skills, education, and cyber zone– part of the £250m Blackburn town centre masterplan – the largest town centre regeneration scheme of its type in the whole region on the former Thwaites site.
 - £20m of levelling up funding for transport links in and around Haslingden Road, including much needed improvements to J5 of the M65
 - £8m through the Youth Investment Fund to transform facilities for children and young people across the borough – the most awarded to any one place in the country last summer.
 - The government has also announced £116m of new funding for transport priorities across the borough.

Summary

- 2.28 It is key to Hyndburn's aspirations that sustainable growth is directed to key locations. The site at Hyndburn Retail Park is ideally positioned to contribute towards the established and planned growth through both Hyndburn's Local Plan and adjacent within Blackburn.
- 2.29 The above paragraphs detail the level of on-going and planned investment into nearby town centres and consider the amendments as suggested below to the positioning of the site within the retail hierarchy as to have limited impact.

3. The Site

Site Context

- 3.1 The representations are made in the context of Peel's ownership of Hyndburn Retail Park an established retail location in the borough which, owing to the location adjacent to major existing and planned employment growth locations and residential areas, can support the sustainable expansion of this area of the borough.
- 3.2 The retail park now accommodates a mix of retailers which includes SCS, Wren Kitchens, Sofology, Dreams, Curry's, B&M Home, JD Sports, Smyths Toys, Food Warehouse, Aldi, Home Bargains, JD Gyms, and Costa.



Figure 9: Site Plan

- 3.3 Previous representations have established the need for co-located complementary services and facilities in areas of existing and planned growth, in order to encourage sustainable patterns of travel and economic growth. In this case, this means planning positively at the retail park for convenience as well as comparison retail floorspace, food and drink uses, health and fitness and leisure facilities, so the uses can support said employment and residential uses and their future planned growth.

- 3.4 Providing the opportunity for these supportive uses to be close to extensive and growing working and residential populations will lead to more sustainable patterns of long-term growth. This, in turn would allow those who work or live nearby in the area to benefit from a wider choice of locally accessible services which would increase the attractiveness of the growth areas to potential occupiers. It is also inherently more sustainable to locate new retail and leisure facilities close to existing provision (rather than in standalone new locations) in order to maximise the benefits of co-location, particularly where this can serve major residential and employment growth in an accessible location.
- 3.5 This is particularly relevant in Hyndburn with the planned (and ongoing) release of land along the M65 corridor and Blackburn Councils recent allocation of significant employment and housing land in close proximity to the site.
- 3.6 The site is not subject to any statutory designations (such as listed buildings or conservation designations) and there are no locally sensitive uses. The site is predominantly in Flood Zone 1 and therefore at the lowest risk of flooding, as shown on the Flood Map for planning.

Planning history

- 3.7 Additionally, and of relevance to these representations, following detailed evidence-based application submissions, Hyndburn Retail Park has been considered by the Local Planning Authority, as a suitable location for a diversified range of retailers and other complementary uses and for additional retail floorspace. Within the last 10 years, the following developments for alterations to unit sizes, additional floorspace, amendments to the permitted range of goods and additional uses have been approved (this is not an exhaustive list).
- Unit 8: 11/21/0655 External and internal alterations with associated works, to enable the formation of up to 3 units – Approved December 2022
 - Unit 5: 11/21/0487 Planning Obligation Modification & 11/21/0634 storage mezzanine to allow JD Sports to trade – Approved June 2022
 - Unit 1: 11/19/0016 Relocation of the existing subdivision within Unit 1, change of use of the remodelled Unit 1B from Use Class A1 (retail) to Use Class D2 (assembly and leisure), and installation of a mezzanine floor – Approved July 2019
 - Unit 1: 11/19/0024 Planning Obligation Modification to Section 106 Agreement to enable Home Bargains to trade – Approved June 2019

- Pod unit: 11/17/0008 Erection of A3/A5 drive through restaurant for Costa Coffee – Approved May 2017
- Replacement Unit 2: 11/15/0430 Erection of Aldi foodstore to replace former Focus DIY and Carpetright units – Approved April 2016

3.8 The key point to note is that over the last ten years, Peel and the Council have worked together successfully resulting in a range of proposals being permitted which have enabled the retail park to evolve and diversify in a way which has retained and added to its 'bulky goods' offer and function.

3.9 This means the catchment population is provided with a modern retail park facility with a range of uses and operators which help to meet the needs of people living and working nearby and reduce the need for them to travel further afield to access such modern facilities, all in a way which is compatible with the policy objectives of retail and town centre policies. This development at the retail park has had no adverse effect on town centre performance but has highlighted and exemplified the benefits of a flexible, evidence-based approach.

3.10 The adopted Development Management DPD Policy DM3 footnote 14 recognises the role and function of Hyndburn Retail Park, whilst confirming its formal position in the retail hierarchy would be assessed through the Site Allocations element of this emerging Local Plan document. This new development plan should therefore provide clarity that the retail park is suitable for both future bulky and non-bulky retail alongside other commercial food and drink and leisure uses, to support existing and planned growth in the area.

3.11 The fact that the park is performing a broader role and function beyond that of a Bulky Goods location should be reflected within policy.

Connectivity

3.12 The retail park is situated on the north eastern side of Whitebirk Drive, off Junction 6 of the M65 and on the edge of the built-up areas of Hyndburn and Blackburn. The retail park is approximately 2.6 kilometres from Blackburn Town Centre and 5 kilometres from Accrington Town Centre.

3.13 It is accessible by car, being directly adjacent to M65 Junction 6. It is also accessible by sustainable forms of transport with bus stops located within 550m of the retail park, on Blackburn Road. These bus stops include bus shelters funded by Peel under planning conditions attached to the planning permission for the new Aldi unit. These stops serve

routes around the local area providing direct links to Blackburn Town Centre, Rishton, Great Harwood and other local destinations.

3.14 Safe access to the site for pedestrians and cyclists is also possible from the canal towpath adjacent to existing Unit 1 of the Hyndburn Retail Park. An additional direct connection was provided at the north western corner of the retail park as part of the Aldi permission.

3.15 In terms of sustainable access, the below figures show the walking and cycling 15-minute catchment to the retail park. As clearly indicated on the maps below, the site is in easy access to existing development and, as detailed through the remainder of this representation, significant planned expansion of both housing and employment.

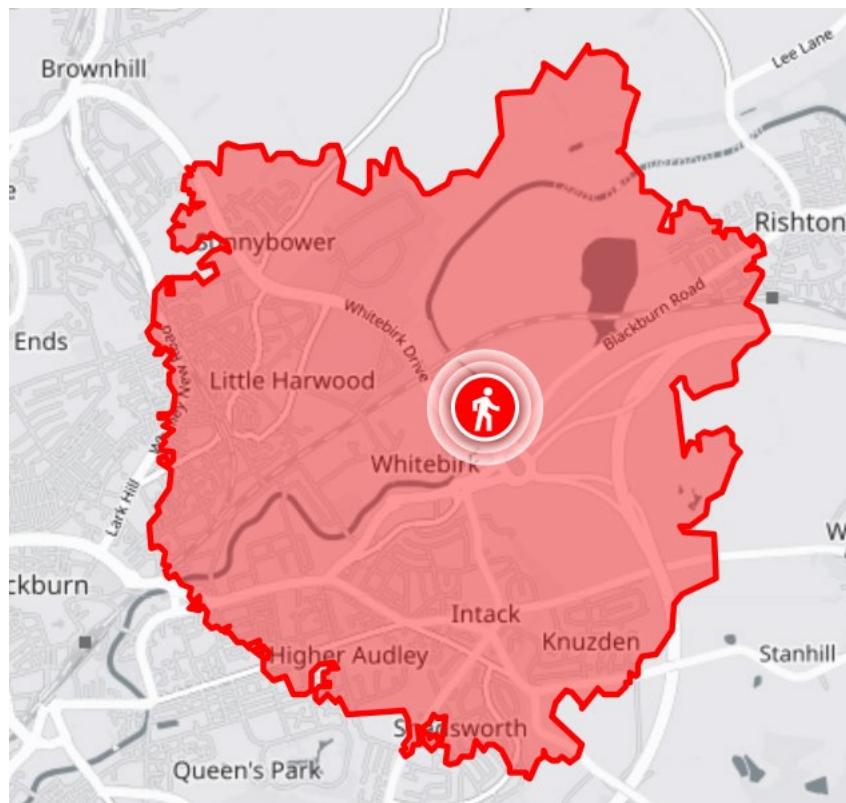


Figure 10: 15-minute Walking Catchment

- 3.20 This includes a recently approved application (ref. 11/23/0449) for the delivery of 14 no. EV charging bays accessed by way of the existing vehicle access points. The proposal will contribute to the establishment of countrywide electric vehicle recharging infrastructure which will assist in increasing the uptake of electric vehicles.
- 3.21 This follows low carbon sustainable building principles and supports the wider principles that the emerging development plan is looking to establish.

Operators

- 3.22 It is notable that those operators at the retail park that are not considered solely Bulky Goods operators, are, on the whole, still operating within the nearby town centres, particularly within Hyndburn itself with Accrington seeing all non-bulky goods operators at the retail park also located within its town centre.

OPERATOR	GOODS CONTROL	ACCRINGTON TOWN CENTRE	BLACKBURN TOWN CENTRE
CURRYS	Bulky Goods		
SOFOLGY	Bulky Goods		
HOME BARGAINS	Bulky/Non Bulky Goods	Yes	Yes
JD GYMS	Commercial/leisure	No	No
JD SPORTS SHOP	Clothes/Sports Goods	No	Yes
B&M	Bulky/Non Bulky Goods	Yes	No
THE FOOD WAREHOUSE	Food	Yes	No
SMYTHS TOY STORES	Bulky/Non Bulky Goods	No	No
WREN KITCHENS	Bulky Goods		
DREAMS	Bulky Goods		
COSTA	Restaurant	Yes	Yes
ALDI	Food	Yes	Yes
SCS	Bulky Goods		

- 3.23 It is clear that the wider offering being sought by Peel, and as detailed through the remainder of this representation, does not remove the potential for operators to have additional locations within local town centres.

Summary

- 3.24 Peel have established an effective retail offering at the site and are continually seeking more diversification of uses, increased service uses, improvements to sustainable power and to benefit from potential improvements to sustainable travel to nearby employment and housing allocations, to ensure the site retains its function and benefits its users. The site will play a significant role as a conveniently located facility for residents of existing and planned housing expansions alongside the significant existing and planned employment locations and therefore, as set out in this document, establishing

the park within the retail hierarchy is consistent with achieving these aims and the creation of a genuinely sustainable growth area.

4. Local Plan Policy Comments

4.1 The Draft Strategic Policies and Site Allocations document has a series of documents that are provided as the emerging appropriate evidence base. Of relevance to these representations, this includes:

- Background Paper 2 – Employment Land - 2024
- Hyndburn Retail Study - 2016
- Hyndburn Retail Thresholds Evidence Note – 2016
- Employment Land Study – 2016
- Employment Land Study: Supply Update – 2019
- Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Update – 2019

Previous Local Plan Stages

4.2 Hyndburn Retail Park was promoted through the 'Call for Sites' exercise (February 2017) and Site Allocations Consultation Paper exercise (April 2018), both as a retail/leisure facility and a location for uses complementary to the wider Whitebirk employment area.

4.3 The supporting Site Assessments (Appendix 4 of the emerging Plan) indicated that a mix of uses would be accepted at the retail park, but any retail uses would not. This assessment is clearly not aligned with the adopted Plan or ongoing Local Plan documents which both identify the retail park as being suitable for future retail uses, including non-bulky retail, to support existing and planned growth in the area. Therefore, the emerging Plan should be clear that retail and mixed uses are supported as envisaged in the ongoing Core Strategy Review.

Policy Review

Policy SP4: Employment Provision and Strategic Sites

4.4 Peel is supportive of the identification of employment land as detailed under policy SP4, particularly in relation to the allocation of sites EM4, EM5 and EM6 which sit, as shown on the below figure, adjacent to Hyndburn Retail Park.

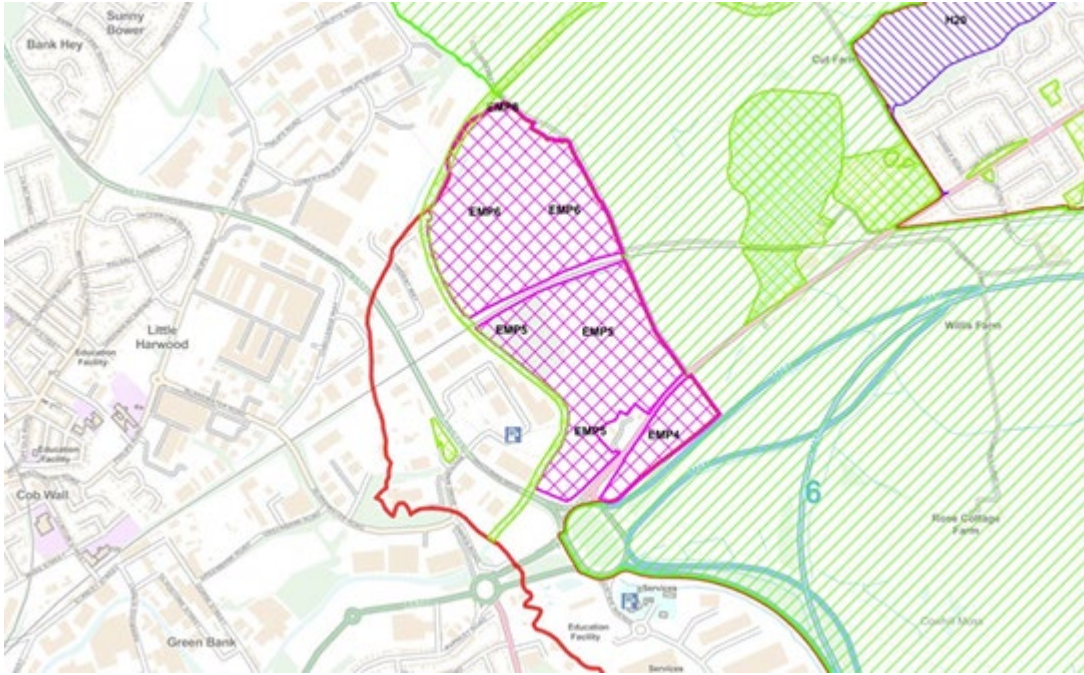


Figure 12: Proposals Map Extract

- 4.5 It is inherently more sustainable to locate new retail and leisure facilities close to existing provision (rather than in standalone new locations) in order to maximise the benefits of co-location. In the case of Hyndburn Retail Park, it's location so close to Frontier Park and sites EMP 4, 5 and 6, in addition to other extensive long-standing employment and residential areas means it is the ideal location in which to concentrate such facilities alongside retail operators.
- 4.6 As such, the ongoing improved offer at Hyndburn Retail Park can meet existing and future demand, thereby complementing rather than competing with the wider offer (and retail hierarchy) in Hyndburn and Blackburn.
- 4.7 We therefore consider this policy effective, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Policy SP6: Centre Hierarchy, Strategy and Retail Provision

- 4.8 In light of the above, we support the broad direction of travel of emerging Policy SP6, which specifically states:

'The Council recognises the complementary role that other commercial locations can play in the local retail hierarchy. The Council will support their future development in line with the strategy set out below, subject to development taking place in a manner that supports the future vitality and viability of the formal town and local centres.'

4.9 This policy then lists Hyndburn Retail Park (as 'The Peel Centre') within the retail hierarchy, as an 'Other Commercial Location' alongside Oswaldtwistle Mills. This is set outside the tiered approach which is as follows:

- Tier 1: Strategic Town Centre
- Tier 2: Town Centres
- Tier 3: Local Centres
- Tier 4: Neighbourhood Centres/Local Parades

4.10 Within the hierarchy presented, the plan identifies Hyndburn Retail Park's purpose as a 'Predominantly bulky goods retail destination with ancillary uses to support retailing on the site and the strategic employment hub at Whitebirk/Frontier Park'.

4.11 Peel welcomes the recognition that Hyndburn Retail Park can perform a mixed and varied retail and leisure role, including bulky and non-bulky retail uses along with providing supportive uses and this reflects the changes seen on the ground in recent years. They also welcome the recognition that such flexibility in use will support the development of Frontier Park, however, this recognition should now be broadened to reference other existing and proposed allocations for both housing and employment which collectively will result in a substantial growth area.

4.12 However, Peel's view is that full options for the retail hierarchy, including designating the Retail Park as a 'centre', have not been thoroughly considered in the Local Plan. To be clear, Peel do not expect a purely Open A1 goods position and the park will continue to serve a range of retailers, both bulky and non-bulky.

4.13 Given the existing and planned development to be seen in this area over the coming plan period, the reality is that the retail park will be truly surrounded by substantial elements of Hyndburn and Blackburn's established and planned strategic employment locations. Such locations drive demand for main town centre uses in close proximity. As such, the role and importance of this park will become more significant for local residents, businesses, and employees and to the attractiveness of these allocations to potential developers and occupiers.

4.14 As officers will be aware, the retail and leisure market is constantly changing as landlords and tenants strive to react to customer demands. Crucially, the market is shifting from a single offer destination (i.e. only containing retail uses) to a mixed offer which includes a range of retail and non-retail (leisure) uses. As such, a diverse retail

and leisure offer is increasingly important if Hyndburn (as a borough) is to retain both customer expenditure and existing retailers. Diversity and flexibility is equally important in respect of serving the need for supporting uses driven by the expanding strategic employment locations.

4.15 In the first instance, the policy does not reference the substantial planned employment growth along the M65 corridor to meet growth aspirations and how the retail park can, through a diverse offering of retail and other supportive uses, assist this growth by adding to the commercial attractiveness of the planned employment areas. Whilst the wording, in part, acknowledges this by noting the park will '*support retailing on the site and the strategic employment hub at Whitebirk/Frontier Park*', there needs to be clearer wording in that the site will support existing employment such as the Frontier Park but also add to the commercial attractiveness and therefore likely success of the employment sites (EM4, EM5 and EM6).

4.16 As such, an amendment to this wording if retained should be as follows:

'support retailing on the site and the strategic employment hub at Whitebirk/Frontier Park **and planned strategic employment release detailed under Policy SP4.**'

4.17 To provide the context, and as detailed earlier in these representations, the level of growth expected in this area is significant. The existing Frontier Park development alone could create 1,900 new jobs which in turn could generate additional employee led retail and leisure expenditure of approximately £4.5m. While further strategic housing and employment allocations seen within the Blackburn Local Plan clearly indicate this is an area of substantial growth and change.

4.18 Greater consideration as to the function of Hyndburn Retail Park is required. Our previous representations have considered a number of ideas with regard to how the retail park should be considered (previously looking at a separate Tier 5 scenario). It is logical, now that development at Frontier Park is nearing completion and in considering how accessibility should be further taken forward in the wider area, to review this further.

4.19 Given the wider scale of development, it is more appropriate to consider it as a Tier 3 District Centre, as its now both serving a wider catchment through the typical bulkier goods operators and a more localised catchments with the inclusion of non-bulky goods including food retailers and gym operators which have been and will continue to serve the evolving areas.

- 4.20 This shift in the hierarchy would more accurately reflect its standing and its role and function; as well as anticipating how the Local Plan allocations themselves will enhance that role over time in any event.
- 4.21 We suggest that the policy be amended to include the following within the centre hierarchy:

Tier 3: District Centre - Hyndburn Retail Park	District centre, separate from the identified town centres, which will be the preferred location to meet needs arising from existing residential and employment areas development of nearby strategic employment locations for supporting uses, including but not limited to, retail, food and drink, leisure, hotels, and fuel facilities, including EV charging stations.
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- 4.22 This amendment would reflect the findings seen within the Local Plan evidence document Hyndburn Retail Park (2016) which shows how the park forms one of the three main comparison-shopping destinations for 4 out of 6 locational zones. When broken down the park has a market share of 10.1% in Zone 1 (Great Harwood and Rishton) and market shares of between approximately 5 and 7 per cent in Zones 3 (Clayton and Altham), 4 (Accrington Central) and 5 (Accrington East).
- 4.23 As such, further investment in the centre and diversification of uses opens up more opportunity for different jobs in the local area which is complementary to the larger employment zone jobs and will not take away from town centres.
- 4.24 Such an approach would align with policy SP31 (as considered below), National Planning Policy Framework and associated PPG, which recognises that retail and leisure development can serve specific and locationally driven demand.
- 4.25 In order for this policy to be effective, the amendments suggested will allow for consideration of the retail park alongside wider sustainability aims of the development plan and ensure its effectiveness within the Development Plan.

Policy SP31: Rishton and Whitebirk

- 4.26 At the previous stages of the Local Plan Preparation (regulation 18), this policy was detailed as Knuzden and Whitebirk. It is not clear from the evidence provided, why this

how now been amended to Rishton and Whitebirk with Knuzden now sitting alongside Oswaldtwistle. Peel would welcome clarity on this amendment.

- 4.27 Policy CS31 (Rishton & Whitebirk) which, in the context of Hyndburn Retail Park, states:
- 'The Council will support the Peel Centre (Whitebirk) as a predominantly bulky goods retailing destination in the Borough, to complement the role of Town Centres and Local Centres in Hyndburn and Blackburn with Darwen. Non-bulky retailing and/or supporting ancillary uses to the retail park and strategic employment hub will be permitted though these **should not exceed 40% of the overall floorspace on the site (NJL Emphasis).**'*
- 4.28 As with emerging policy SP31, the 'direction of travel' is welcomed, but further amendments to the policy would ensure the park can meet established demand for improved local facilities within this area. In turn this ensures the Plan can remain positive, geared to delivering growth and sustainable overall.
- 4.29 The policy recognition that the retail park is more than a bulky goods retail location is welcomed and supported. Peel's view is a further line should be added to the policy which recognises the role of park in the hierarchy as per the proposed changes proposed to Policy SP6, and therefore that additional development should not be subject to the town centre uses tests (i.e. the 'sequential' and 'impact' tests (as we have identified for emerging Policy CS5). That way Hyndburn Retail Park can respond to market demand for new or altered retail and non-retail space and over the course of the Plan Period to 2037, satisfy existing and future demand in the area generated by existing and proposed residential and employment uses.
- 4.30 Further changes are also required to the policy justification, particularly at paragraphs 10.69 and 10.71 to reflect that Hyndburn Retail Park is not simply or solely an 'out of centre' retail facility, as it is detailed within Policy SP6 as providing a complimentary function and does not necessarily need to be restricted to predominantly bulky goods retail.
- 4.31 With these amendments, the retail park will ensure an area for investment in services and that policy can then prevent sporadic or speculative proposals for such uses more effectively.
- 4.32 The suggested amendment to this policy will ensure that the plan is positively prepared and effective in terms of its ability to support the delivery of significant growth in the wider area and over the course of the plan period.

Policy SP13: Climate Change and Sustainable Development

- 4.33 Peel are supportive of Policy SP13 given its clear direction on responding to and mitigating the effects of climate change. Its positive wording relating development managing this through existing and proposed development.
- 4.34 Given the climate emergency declared by the borough in 2019, this policy provides a strategic aim to ensure sustainable development. Under the policy justification, at paragraph 7.6 it states:
- 'One of the key aims of the Local Plan is to secure sustainable patterns of development in Hyndburn so that people live close to goods and services and there are opportunities to use sustainable means of transport.'*
- 4.35 The amendments suggested as part of this representation fully align with this aim and would allow for the retail park to function with a wider retail offering. This would allow for a more sustainable pattern of development with significant growth in both employment and housing development, to be in walking or cycling distance to goods and services at Hyndburn Retail Park.
- 4.36 We consider this policy effective, justified, and consistent with National Policy.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This document has been prepared by NJL Consulting on behalf of 'Peel Land and Investments Ltd.' in response to the 'Hyndburn Local Plan' Consultation. On behalf of Peel, we have made a number of suggested changes to the ongoing Local Plan preparation.
- 5.2 We believe that there is a real opportunity to consider this whole area on a more joined up basis to create a more sustainable planning outcome. There are opportunities to link recent and proposed developments in transport terms, and to recognise more accurately the role that the Hyndburn Retail Park plays now and how it can be further enhanced in the future.
- 5.3 Footnote 14 of Policy DM3 of the Development Management Plan clarifies the Hyndburn Retail Park (noted as "the Peel Centre" in the footnote) would have its formal status in the hierarchy defined in the Allocations DPD. Hence, there is a necessity to discuss and clarify that status accordingly prior to further consultation.
- 5.4 Our previous representations have considered a number of ideas with regard to how the retail park should be considered (previously looking at a separate Tier 5 scenario). It is logical, now that development at Frontier Park is nearing completion, and in considering how accessibility should be further taken forward in the wider area, to review this further. Given the increased scale of development very close by, it is more appropriate to consider it as a Tier 3 District Centre as this would more accurately reflect its standing in the hierarchy and its role and function; as well as anticipating how the Local Plan allocations themselves will enhance that role over time in any event.
- 5.5 Therefore, in summary, the Local Plan should:
- Be fully aligned with the suggested amendments above;
 - Recognise the potential for additional flexible retail, leisure, and other supportive uses at Hyndburn Retail Park; and
 - Create a policy approach which recognises the role of the retail park in meeting local demand for well-located and sustainable facilities in this area of the borough.
- 5.6 Therefore, the retail park presents a clear opportunity to promote the most sustainable patterns of development (for example, the promotion of linked trips) by grouping

supporting uses together in a broad area, rather than providing facilities in a sporadic way on individual smaller opportunity sites.

- 5.7 Overall, Peel supports the general 'direction of travel' but consider that amendments are required for the Plan to be effective and to respond to the evidence base and then set frameworks which enable sustainable patterns of growth. In particular, the Plan should ensure the full range of retail, leisure and other supportive uses can be delivered at the park, and thereby meet existing and future demand (as accepted in the consultation Plans.)
- 5.8 We remain concerned that the plan downplays planned economic growth opportunities, particularly those linked to this area of the borough and how retail policies can better reflect the changing landscape through this Development Plan and the neighbouring Blackburn Local Plan.
- 5.9 The retail park is in a sustainable location within the heart of the urban area, close to existing and proposed large scale residential and employment locations, which it will be at the centre of. Therefore, the retail park presents a clear opportunity to promote the most sustainable patterns of development (for example, the promotion of linked trips) by grouping supporting uses together in a broad area, rather than providing facilities in a sporadic way on individual smaller opportunity sites.
- 5.10 We trust the above comments can be considered appropriately and we welcome future opportunities to discuss this in more depth and request formally to be heard at examination stage.

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party. Any such party relies on this report at their own risk.

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